

# Ceasefire Christmas Choir 🎄🇵🇸

PUBLIC TOOLKIT

#CeasefireCarols

Find the carols at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FjMr5bc6cxDiZDNlvAGOh7mk7bhbf5zh>

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**I. PURPOSE:** To call white/European-descent Christians + Christian lineage people into action for a permanent ceasefire, to stop the genocide in Gaza, and an end to the occupation of Palestine. This call is due to both the role and relationship of Christian hegemony related to Palestine/Israel, as well as to call people into alignment with liberatory Christian teachings.

- Many powerful voices of Palestinians, Arab, and Muslim communities, Jews, and Black Christian leaders are taking a stand, while white Christian voices are largely absent.
- White/European Christians, historically and presently, have played major roles in the creation of Zionism by supporting Israel's violent occupation of Palestine and remaining a [major political force](#) behind the current atrocities. Antisemitism also originated in Christian Europe, and has functioned to protect the interests of the Christian ruling class.

**II. ORIGIN:** The structure of this carol-singing action series is decentralized and is meant for anyone around the US to implement. It was dreamed up by two raised-Christian white Midwestern cis-women who are long-time social justice organizers.

### III. ACTION CONCEPT & GOALS

[**NOTE:** the term “Christian/lineage” is shorthand for describing practicing Christians, people with Christian heritage, and secular Christians.]

- To form a **“Ceasefire Christmas Choir”** and organize **a series of Christian/lineage-led caroling actions** throughout the Christmas season (Nov. 27 - Dec. 25), all throughout the US ([amplified via Instagram](#); #CeasefireCarols).
- To kick off the action, we are asking folks to prioritize doing their **first action on Saturday, December 2nd**, in order to gain collective momentum, and to then do repeated actions after. Carol as many times as your heart desires! This is what's called a “rinse and repeat” action in that it can be used multiple times, and you can iterate as you go.
- **Spread the message of a Permanent Ceasefire, and be visible and outspoken for Ceasefire as Christian/lineage people**, making this demand alongside Jews and Palestinians.
- **To get more Christian/lineage people to take concrete action for Ceasefire, an end to U.S. military aid to Israel, for Palestine, for release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners, and for the end of occupation** - connect people to actions like calling/emailing reps, becoming aware of local

groups leading actions and following them, and joining local orgs that are taking action. *Flyers will be key for this!*

- To use our talents of performance and musicality in these actions **to get attention on social media and spread widely**
- **Move our congress people to call for a ceasefire and to sign on to Rep. Cori Bush's ceasefire resolution**, by mobilizing people to make calls, and through direct caroling action targets congress people.
- **To lovingly face Christian/lineage people with the questions:** *How am I complicit and what will I do? What does our tradition call us to do?*

#### IV. VALUES & TALKING POINTS

Review these values with your choir, as well as learn/practice them with your group in preparation to talk with the public.

- We are adding our voices to the national movement calling for a permanent ceasefire. We know this struggle has been going on for a long time and will likely continue for a long time. **We want a permanent ceasefire and an end to the genocide in Gaza, we want an end to Israeli occupation and apartheid. We want the return of Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners. We want a future of peace and safety for all people in Palestine / Israel.** We are following these demands from Palestinian, Arab, Muslim and Jewish-led movements.
- **Humility. We don't have all the knowledge or all the answers.** We are humble to our not-knowing of what the long-term solutions in the region should be, but we know enough to say that what's happening is horrific and wrong and must stop.
- **We have a stake and a role as Christian heritage people and as US citizens.** What's happening in Palestine / Israel is our issue and our problem. Christianity, Christian Zionism, white supremacy, islamophobia, and settler colonialism have been and continue to be powerful forces in the creation and perpetuation of Zionism and the violence we are witnessing.
- We hold **all life to be precious**. Palestinian lives, Israeli lives. All life.

- **You are welcome, whoever you are.** Whatever your relationship with Christianity, religious background, racial identity, sexual orientation/gender identity. We acknowledge that Christianity has harmed some of us, has been powerfully healing for some of us, some of us are practicing today, some of us are not.
- **We speak up, we don't stay silent.** Many of us hold identities (White, Christian, USer, midwestern, privileged) that encourage us to be silent in the face of oppressions perpetuated by our people and lean away from conflict. We choose to come together to break out of those patterns.
- **We denounce and oppose Antisemitism and Islamophobia** and believe that they are real and dangerous forces. We do not believe that criticizing the policies and actions of the state of Israel is antisemitic.

## V. HISTORICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

It's important to engage in self-education enough so that we can act from an informed place, and so that people feel moved to take action. If you are one of the choir leaders, please be sure to familiarize yourself with core concepts by reading through these resources. We also encourage you to share them with your Choir participants and to engage with this material as part of your rehearsal.

White/Christian-lineage people have played major roles in Zionism, longstanding Israeli occupation and apartheid, warmongering, and are the majority of key power holders in the US government. Anti-semitism originated in Christian Europe. They/we have benefitted from these systems more than anyone else (read: [Christian hegemony](#)), therefore, this is “our issue” as Christian/lineage people just as much as our Palestinian and Jewish comrades. Additionally, the active mass violence/killings, apartheid, and sourcing the conflict with US money and weapons are not in alignment with Christian values and are fundamentally opposed to the teachings of Jesus. This action series is explicit about being against Islamophobia and Antisemitism. As Christian-lineage people, many of us have internalized feelings like “what’s happening is Israel/Palestine isn’t my issue”. “It’s so terrible how Jews and Palestinians/Muslims hate each other (and this has nothing to do with me)”. “This conflict is too complicated and can never be resolved.” This project intends to help us as Christian/lineage people understand our stake, how we are complicit in these systems of violence, and to move into action.

**Here are some key points of historical and political context:**

**Zionism and the Occupation of Palestine:**

- From [US Campaign for Palestinian Rights](#): “Zionism is the political ideology behind establishing and maintaining a Jewish demographic majority in Palestine through the state of Israel and at the expense of the native Palestinian population. Early Zionist leaders understood that to manufacture a Jewish majority in Palestine, they would drive out the native Palestinian population and settle Jewish people in their place. This objective continues to guide Israeli policies, manifesting in ways that include a network of illegal Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank, the siege of the Gaza Strip, the ongoing displacement of Bedouins in the Naqab inside Israel, and the ban on return for millions of Palestinian refugees. Zionism is, and always has been, a settler-colonial project.”
- “Since 1967, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have lived under a brutal Israeli military occupation, which is among the most visible forms of its settler colonialism and apartheid. This occupation has included Jewish-only, illegal settlements built on stolen Palestinian land; military checkpoints; thousands of Palestinians imprisoned and killed by the Israeli army; theft and restriction of natural resources, tens of thousands of home demolitions; and more than one million olive trees uprooted.” For more, watch this [video from Amnesty International on Israeli Apartheid](#).

**Christian Zionism:** is a powerful political force, and is one of the key forces promoting and backing the US government’s support of Israel’s violent tactics. Christian Zionism is a deeply antisemitic ideology. As taken from FOSNA’s [Christian Zionism Toolkit](#):

- “Christian Zionist theology holds that Israel must gather all the Jews of the world, enlarge its territory, destroy Muslim holy places, and ethnically cleanse “the holy land” of all non-Jews. A majority of evangelical Christians in the United States believe that support for such actions by Israel will help hasten the return of Christ and the desired end of the world. While most theologians (be they progressive or evangelical) consider it heresy, many Christians hold this far-right ideology without realizing its implications.

- Christian Zionism is a political and theological ideology that misuses Christian texts to support the modern nation-state of Israel out of the belief that Israel has a cosmic purpose in bringing about the “End Times” which will culminate in the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world.
- Christian Zionists make up the largest US voting bloc supporting Israel’s most heinous practices. Christian Zionist lobbies like Christians United for Israel (CUFI) leverage their political power to ensure the US gives moral and political cover to Israeli [colonization](#), [war crimes](#), and [ethnic cleansing](#).”
- Attend this [teach-in](#) with Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) & Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) Wed. Nov 29, 8PM ET

**Christian Hegemony:** is the everyday, pervasive, deep-seated, and institutionalized dominance of Christian institutions, Christian values, Christian leaders, and Christians as a group.

- From [Paul Kivel](#): “Nothing is unaffected by Christian hegemony (whether we are Christian or not) including our personal beliefs and values, our relationships to other people and to the natural environment, and our economic, political, education, health care, criminal/legal, housing, and other social systems.
- Christian hegemony benefits all Christians, all those raised Christian, and those passing as Christian. However the concentration of power, wealth, and privilege under Christian hegemony accumulates to the ruling class and the predominantly white male Christian power elite that serve its interests. All people who are not Christian, as well as most people who are, experience social, political, and economic exploitation, violence, cultural appropriation, marginalization, alienation and constant vulnerability from the dominance of Christian power and values in our society.”

**Islamophobia:** is anti-Muslim racism

- As taken from [Defining Islamophobia](#): “Islamophobia is anti–Muslim racism. At length, Islamophobia is a fear, hatred, or prejudice toward Islam and Muslims that results in a pattern of discrimination and oppression. Islamophobia creates a distorted understanding of Islam and Muslims by transforming the global and historical faith tradition of Islam, along with the rich history of cultural and ethnic diversity of its adherents, into a set of stereotyped characteristics most often reducible to themes of violence, civilizational subversion, and fundamental otherness. Islamophobia must also be understood as a system

of both religious and racial animosity that is perpetuated by private citizens as well as cultural and political structures.”

- From the [United Nations](#): “Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and other horrific acts of terrorism purportedly carried out in the name of Islam, institutional suspicion of Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim has escalated to epidemic proportions. Numerous states, as well as regional and international bodies, have responded to security threats by adopting measures that disproportionately target Muslims and define Muslims as high-risk and at risk of radicalization. At the same time, widespread negative representations of Islam, and harmful stereotypes that depict Muslims and their beliefs and culture as a threat have served to perpetuate, validate and normalize discrimination, hostility and violence towards Muslim individuals and communities.”

**Antisemitism:** is serious and real, and it is not antisemitic to criticize the state of Israel.

- From [Jewish Voice for Peace](#): “[Antisemitism](#) is grave, serious, and totally incompatible with movements for collective liberation, and we stand against it in any form. Antisemitism is discrimination, targeting, violence, and dehumanizing stereotypes directed at Jews because they are Jewish. In the past decade alone, some examples of the horrifying white nationalist antisemitic violence we have witnessed include the murder of 11 congregants at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018, synagogue shootings at a Chabad synagogue in Poway, California in 2019, Nazi symbols at the January 6, 2021 U.S. Capitol insurrection, antisemitic hate groups and rallies, and the desecration of cemeteries. We have also seen the use of Jewish stereotypes and conspiracy theories as part of racist ideologies. Visibly observant Jews have been especially harassed and harmed”
- [JFREJ's 'On Antisemitism'](#) (pg 11) “Originating in European Christianity, antisemitism is the form of ideological oppression that targets Jews. In Europe and the United States, it has functioned to protect the prevailing economic system and the almost exclusively Christian ruling class by diverting blame for hardship onto Jews. Like all oppressions, it has deep historical roots and uses exploitation, marginalization, discrimination and violence as its tools. Like all oppressions, the ideology contains elements of dehumanization and degradation via lies and stereotypes about Jews, as well as a mythology.

The myth changes and adapts to different times and places, but fundamentally it says that Jews are to blame for society's problems."

## VI. WHY SINGING

- Songs have the ability to [deeply move us and open our hearts](#)
- Christmas carols are well known to secular Christians and practicing Christians alike, and are a platform with which to call into question Christian people's relationship to Palestine and Israel.
- Singing can be a joyful, connecting, and creative way to take action together

## VII. WHO ARE THE SINGERS?

- We recommend a minimum of 6 (2 people on each part) up to however big you'd like, but also feel free to be creative!
- This is an action focused on/targeting white Christians and the singers would be primarily of Christian/lineage people. The aim is for the optics to be read as a Christian-led action (knowing that Christians are very diverse). Songs will be sung from the perspective of Christians, and people who are not Christian are welcome within this context.
- Like any action, this action could elicit counter protests or strong reactions, so participants should be aware of this when opting-in. Organizers should communicate risk levels to participants, depending on the specific actions, so that participants are always in consent.
- People with any level of singing experience are invited to participate. If people aren't comfortable with harmonies, they can hold down the melody. Ideally there are folks who can hold down harmonies who are part of the group.
- **What do we mean by "Christians and Christian-lineage" people?**
  - We mean anyone who has ancestors who practiced Christianity, anyone who was raised Christian, or anyone who practices Christianity today. This includes religious Christians as well as secular Christians. Christians are incredibly diverse, and include people of all races, ethnicities, ancestries, and are all over the world.



- As Christians living within Christian hegemony and in a Christian-dominant society, we are members of the dominant group. One of the ways privilege manifests for Christians is having the ability to opt-in and opt-out of identifying as Christian. By contrast, many Muslim or Jewish people cannot “opt-out” of being perceived as Muslim or Jewish and they cannot opt-out of islamophobia and antisemitism.
- Paul Kivel defines christian hegemony as “the everyday, systematic set of Christian values, individuals and institutions that dominate all aspects of US society. Nothing is unaffected.” When we name our Christian lineage, we name cultural forces that have shaped many aspects of who we are, as well as systemic privileges we or our ancestors may have received through our/their Christianity. These privileges are vastly amplified for those of us who are white.

## VIII. EDUCATION & ACTION FLIERS

- 1. Pass out fliers about Christian Zionism (*coming soon!*)
- 2. **Create a flier specifically for how to take action in your specific location**, including: upcoming local actions, where people can learn more, the information for contacting your representatives, etc. - feel free to use [this template](#) and these resources while compiling: [find a protest here](#) or [here](#), [call your rep here](#), [email Biden](#), [donate here](#), [toolkit for action](#).

## IX. ACTION IDEAS & TYPES

### Location Ideas

- **Carol in public places where Christmas is being visibly observed.** Ex: At a mall in front of a big Christmas decoration, at a pop-up Christmas market, at a public Christmas display (like Rockefeller center in NYC).
- **Carol at a public official’s office, fundraiser, speaking event, home, etc. with the call to sign on to Cori Bush’s Ceasefire resolution in the House.** Location ideas:
  - Outside or inside Rep’s offices during working hours

- Dream: at an event where they are specifically observing Christmas!
- **Carol at your Church:** work with a/your church choir to learn the carols and sing them at different events
- **Carol and record at home:** if you're unable to be in the streets, make a quality recording in your living room to amplify on social media (& could call your reps while gathering!)

### **Ideas for Types of Actions**

- Simply sing the Ceasefire Christmas Carols in the above ways
- Sing Ceasefire Christmas Carols at a protest to sustain direct action
- Do a sit-in or a die-in while singing the songs
- Implement a flash mob
- Do a "costume" change within the action
- Bring candles and light them (like Lessons & Carols)

### **Flow of the Action**

- Sing in a traditional Christmas Carol way, one song after the other
- Sing a few minutes of each song, with NO breaks
- Start dispersed, then gather like a flash mob, singing the songs in succession

## **X. VISUALS FOR THE ACTION**

- The most successful actions have clear visuals, including signage and messaging, coordinated props and outfits, meaningful symbols, and thoughtful location of the action.
- We want these actions to clearly signal that we are people of Christian lineage taking action for a permanent ceasefire and for a free Palestine. We also want it to be immediately clear who are and aren't the members of your group and that you are cohesive.
- **Here are our recommendations for visuals- we ask that as much as possible, you use these visual elements so that actions have a similar look and feel across locations.**
  - Bring black binders - these serve the dual purpose of holding your [sheet music](#), and they also make us look like carolers.

- Everyone wears red and green scarves. If people don't have these already, buy a length of red and green fleece from a fabric store and cut it into simple scarves
- Make signs that convey your message clearly. *Templates for signs and banners coming this week (11/29-12/1)!*
- Plan an art-build before your action to make the necessary materials
- Plan actions to take place in front of public displays of Christmas decorations, when possible.

## **XI. PREPARATION FOR & POST-ACTION**

### **Relationship Building:**

- **Are there other groups organizing around these issues where you live?** We recommend that you reach out to them to let them know what you're doing, and to see if they have feedback or want to collaborate. Acting in solidarity and building relationships with other aligned groups can help our local strategies be more effective, and can also help keep us all safe in the context of any backlash.
- Something to keep in mind is that backlash against groups or people speaking out often doesn't land on those of us with the most privilege (white people, Christians, etc.). Building connections with Muslim and Jewish led groups who are aligned around the same values can help keep all of us aware and safe.

### **Music:**

- Review the [sheet music](#) (more will be added) & listen to [the recordings](#) (*coming very soon!*)
- Strong recommendation to rehearse the songs in advance with your group (and any related specific action). This will make the action more powerful if it sounds good, and will spread more! If someone in your community is good at leading songs, recruit them to lead or co-lead this rehearsal.
- Rehearse the carols, as well as sing some of the powerful movement non-carol songs that are moving through movement right now (feel free to use this [song list resource](#))

### **Choir Rehearsal:**

- Recruit your choir through emailing trusted listservs, making announcements in related groups, reaching out to friends, a Facebook event (keep private), etc.

- Find a 2-hr time when the majority of your choir members can attend
- Provide basic political education on Christian Zionism and roles of Christian/lineage people in this moment within your group
- Share grounding with each other in why we are doing this, the strategy, etc.
- Prepare people for the logistics of the action & practice it
- Covid - be considerate of people's needs around COVID safety whether that's everyone taking rapid tests before or masking
- Use this **sample agenda** [~2 hours]:
  - Welcome / Why we're here
  - Intros: names & pronouns
  - Principles & Values Review
  - Turn & chat with neighbor: what brought you here today? And/or what's coming up for you as you read these values?
  - Rehearse the music!! (~20 min each song)
  - Discuss action, inc. props & communication plan (~20 min)
  - Closing: gratitude & review of next steps

### Props:

- Discuss the props and signage (as listed above)
- If you need to raise funds, pass a hat at your rehearsals and ask people to contribute

### Social Media:

- Create your communication plan:
  - Identify who will film at least 30 seconds of the action - here are some [tips for how to film](#)
  - Identify whose Instagram account will be used to post it, and for them to be ready to post the 30 second film-bit with these 3 components after the action:
    - Add the hashtag #CeasefireCarols (as well as #Ceasefirenow #FreePalestine)

- Tag the Instagram account “CeasefireCarols”
  - Tag the location of where you and add it with text as a layer on top
- **Encourage everyone to follow the [CeasefireCarols IG account](#), to follow the #CeasefireCarols, and to amplify as people post their videos from across the country (by sharing in the Stories format on IG)!**

## **XII. MATERIALS TO BRING**

- [Carol Sheet Music](#) printed out
- Props (binders & scarves)
- Signage/banners
- Water/hot drinks
- A charged phone
- Fliers
  - 1. About Christian Zionism (TBD)
  - 2. How to Take Action (created by each respective choir)
- Anything additional for your action